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RAPHAEL
PINDAR

PINDAR ON PARNASSUS: A NEOPYTHAGOREAN IMPULSE IN RAPHAEL'S STANZA DELLA SEGNATURA

BY

CHRISTIANE L. JOOST-GAUGIER

"In the drama of human art the poet provides the words but the actors add their own quality... for they have more to do than merely repeat the author's words: in the truer drama... the Soul displays itself in a part assigned by the creator of the piece"¹.

IN these lines Plotinus, a late Classical author well appreciated by Renaissance humanists, suggests a new way of reading the *Parnassus* (fig. 1), the most conspicuously Classical of the frescoes painted by Raphael for

the private library of Julius II, now known as the Stanza della Segnatura. Because the inhabitants of this unique coterie have, for the most part, not yet been securely identified, a full understanding of the subject of this painting has not yet been



FIG. 1. - RAPHAEL. *Parnassus*. Vatican, Stanza della Segnatura. Photo Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie.

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FIG. 2. – Marcantonio RAIMONDI. *Parnassus*, engraving of Raphael's *Parnassus*. Washington, National Gallery of Art. Photo museum.

achieved. It will be the purpose of this paper to study one of the major actors in the drama presented, the seated old man to the right, from a Neopythagorean perspective such as that presented to Renaissance readers by Plotinus, in order to suggest his identity which in turn will suggest a new reading of the overall iconographical scheme of the painting and its relation to the Stanza as a whole. This scheme is far more enriched and elaborate than what has often been described as merely a gathering of famous poets in the company of their patron, the god of poetry².

Unfortunately, since no compositional drawings for this fresco survive, Raphael did not leave us a visible clue concerning his struggle to accommodate the complexities of its subject matter³. The earliest surviving record of this fresco, an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (fig. 2), is very different from the fresco as we know it today, suggesting that it was made before the composition was put in final finished form by its author. Indeed, the only figures clearly recognizable in both compositions are Apollo in the center and Homer, Dante, and Virgil who form a small group on the hill to the left of Apollo.

Not only would the final form of this composition considerably alter the location, position,

and character of Apollo: it would, as well, introduce the other two of its principal characters who were to become the major foreground figures. Thus was Apollo brought higher up in the composition – forming its summit, his posture changed, and his instrument transformed to become the version of that instrument most appropriate, according to Cicero, Macrobius, and others who had linked it to Plato's cosmology, to him and directly linking him with Sappho, his protagonist to the left. These alterations have recently suggested that a unified theme based on the change of instrument given to Apollo, the seven-stringed lyre (or *lira da braccio*)⁴, might be found in a Neopythagorean inspiration that appears to have dominated the revision, or finalization, of this fresco⁵. According to this theory not only poetry, but also music which through its intervals exemplified the numerical relations of Pythagorean universal harmony, is represented in this theme. Thus it becomes important that Apollo is represented not only as the god of poetry but also as the god of music, for they are one. Their unification suggests that the music of the spheres, compounded from the invention of the lyre by Apollo and the invention of lyrical poetry by Sappho elevates poetry to the status of a universal

cosmological meaning that complements and contributes to the unifying concept of the Stanza della Segnatura and its elegant humanistic program so far incompletely understood.

The third protagonist (fig. 3), who therefore forms together with Apollo and Sappho an important anchor to the design, must now be considered. His powerful dimension and prominent location, the exhilaration of his mood, and the command of his gesture suggest that he forms an important part of the painted idea as it was revised and cast into final form by Raphael. Indeed, together with Apollo and Sappho, he forms the third point in an isosceles triangle that dominates the entire composition.

The monumental old bearded man seated opposite Sappho, who grandly gestures with his left arm while turning his body to carry on an ebullient conversation with his enraptured neighbor, has never been conclusively identified. While he has variously been referred to as Aeschylus, Horace, Pindar and, indirectly, Archilochus, no one has suggested a consistent thematic reason for any of these possibilities. Indeed, most writers refer to this figure simply as 'the aged man to the right'.

When Giorgio Vasari wrote about this painting in 1550, and again in 1568, he evidently did not know the identity of the seated old man to the right dressed in a bright green and mauve tunic for he did not refer to him at all, though he noted the presence of Sappho on the opposite side⁶, who is identified by the scroll she holds aloft. Writing at the end of the following century, Giovanni Pietro Bellori supposed, on the basis of the similarity of his heavy brow and majestic face to a 'noted' portrait which he unfortunately did not identify, that this elderly *pensatore* might be Pindar. Bellori suggested this aged poet was represented in the act of singing and that his song was addressed to his standing young neighbor who expresses his rapture with his outstretched arms, possibly Horace, who he described as an imitator of Pindar⁷.

Rather than relying on Bellori's interpretation, modern writers have tended to doubt, disregard, or ignore Bellori's view. In 1926, and again in 1947, Gottfried Hoogewerff suggested that the

seated old man was the Attic tragedian Aeschylus, while he saw Pindar as one of the standing younger men to the left of the painting who together with another young man, identified as Horace, was in the group next to Sappho⁸. Luitpold Dussler, whose major work encompassed much of the vast Raphael literature prior to 1966, was hesitant to identify the seated old man who he considered among the many figures of the *Parnassus* whose identity still remained uncertain⁹. Among the more recent writers on this fresco, Luisa Becherucci suggested the white haired poet was Horace¹⁰. In 1970, John Pope-Hennessy suggested his uncertainty: though the old man might be Pindar it was also possible that the standing younger man to the far left of the painting might be Pindar, in which case the old man's identity remained unknown¹¹. Roger Jones and Nicholas Penny tended, without conviction, to follow the idea that the seated old man might be Aeschylus¹².



FIG. 3. - RAPHAEL. *Parnassus* (detail showing Pindar). Vatican, Stanza della Segnatura. Photo Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie.

In an interesting study of this fresco, Paul Watson – somewhat disappointingly – referred to the vigorous poet merely as the “masculine counterpart” of Sappho¹³. In the past year James Beck reaffirmed his own previous attribution of the old man as Horace, who he termed a “worthy Roman counterpart to Sappho”¹⁴.

It will be seen below that very good reason exists to suggest that this important figure is none other than Pindar, and that the role he plays in the composition not only underlines the Neopythagorean theme of the whole but also suggests a Neopythagorean reading of its main figures who through their combination, position, and disposition refer to each other on a level distinct from that of the other inhabitants of this lofty secluded retreat. Perhaps it was a Ciceronian influence at the court of Julius that stimulated the transformation of what might have been merely a collection of famous poets into an essentially Greek theme that sought, as surely did its neighbor, the *School of Athens*, to demonstrate the unity and assimilation of the literary and musical arts as part of an overall and governing Pythagorean doctrine that derived from the mainstream of Greek thought as it was admired in the Renaissance.

Although Aristotle suggested, in his *Poetics*, that drama – with its constituent plots, episodes, and structures – was an important part of his view of poetry¹⁵, his few remarks about Aeschylus would not seem to merit Raphael's selection, on this basis, of this dramatist for a major role in a scene dedicated to exalting the rarified atmosphere of Mount Parnassus. Although Aeschylus lived into his 60s, he was not particularly old when he died. We do not know that he played the lyre¹⁶. Parnassus was not of particular importance in any known works by him, and Apollo, while a character in one of his plays, does not appear to have had a unique importance for him¹⁷. With respect to what can be deduced of his appearance, Greek literary sources suggest that Aeschylus was bald in his maturity¹⁸. Few statues of Aeschylus are recorded in antique literature and no portrait of him with his name inscribed has survived¹⁹. Portraits now thought to represent Aeschylus all



FIG. 4. – Pindar, portrait from Aphrodisias, bearing an inscription, ca. 5th c. A.D. Photo R.R.R. Smith.

strongly resemble each other; all of them show a middle-aged man with a distinctly narrow face and distinctly curly hair (none of them is bald) and a curly beard²⁰. None of them resembles the old man to the right of Raphael's painting.

Though as the inventor of iambic poetry Archilochus might seem somewhat more appropriate for induction to the lofty assemblage of Parnassian poets, several problems would seem to quarrel with this identification. In the first place, the dates of this ancient Greek poet's life are unknown as was (in the Renaissance) also his age²¹. There would thus be no particular reason for representing him, in contrast to all the others, as a distinctly elderly man with white hair. In addition his work, known to us only in fragments, was no better known by Renaissance humanists. It contains little that would express a special link to Apollo; the suggestion that his elegiac epigrams were sung to the flute (rather than to the lyre)

would seem to discredit him further from the entourage of the *Parnassus*²².

Horace is an even less likely candidate as the white haired old man for Horace, as Renaissance humanists knew, died in his mid 50's. Humanists also knew that Horace was short and fat and that he had a big belly²³. Surviving inscribed antique portraits of Horace show him as very different from the aged poet in Raphael's painting: he is much more youthful, with a small narrow face and pointed chin; his hair is cut short and he is beardless²⁴. Renaissance researchers, including Raphael (for Vasari tells us that Raphael sent draughtsmen all over Italy and as far as Greece to gather visual information)²⁵, surely knew very well what Horace looked like through his own description,



FIG. 5. — *Pindar?* Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. Photo museum.

through that of Suetonius, or through inscribed coins.

There is, on the other hand, every reason to believe that the grand old seated figure is Pindar, the greatest lyric poet of Greece. One of the few ancient poets known to have lived a very long life which can in part be dated by the athletic events he celebrated, there is a consistent tradition that he lived to be eighty years old. Raphael's majestic elderly poet could well be of this age. The shine of his sensuous, full lips suggests the antique tradition noting that bees had deposited wax or honey on them during his youth²⁶. The bearded elder also resembles the only surviving inscribed antique portrait known to be Pindar (fig. 4)²⁷. Both have strong squarish faces, prominent brows, strong highly modulated cheekbones, large lips, and a short, shaggy, square-cut beard that continues along the sides of the head and over the upper lip. A number of other copies of this type are known²⁸. Nor is Raphael's painted figure dissimilar to a large Hellenistic statue of a seated poet, whose partially surviving inscription suggests him to be Pindar²⁹. Seated with one leg advancing forward of the other, this figure is believed to have held a lyre. A painted example of this type, believed to be Pindar, survives in a fresco at Pompei³⁰. Raphael's poet also resembles another antique sculpture of a seated figure that has similar powerful proportions and similar vigorous internally inspired movement and, as well, a highly structured face. This figure was for a long time believed to represent Pindar (fig. 5)³¹. Although Greek sculptors frequently chose the seated position for poets, the representation of Pindar in a seated position would be particularly appropriate for he is associated in antique literature with a chair. Pausanias describes a famous chair near the hearth in the Temple at Delphi which was believed to be the very one in which Pindar sat while composing his songs to Apollo³². Though no evidence suggests that Raphael knew these particular antique portraits which are known to us today, they show that the Hellenistic world was familiar with images of this poet, and they all represent a type that is consistent with Raphael's image.

Early printed editions of Pindar's works suggest that no particular bust of Pindar was well known in the Renaissance, for their engraved decorations and frontispieces lack a portrait of the poet³³. The earliest engraved portrait known to this writer appears in a 1744 edition of Pindar printed in Glasgow (fig. 6)³⁴. Though its frontispiece engraving is surely based on an eighteenth century sculpture, the same overhanging brow, small ears, prominent lips, and surrounding beard that follows to the upper lip of a highly structured face suggest that the eighteenth century idea of Pindar was based on a model or idealized type not dissimilar from that of Raphael's painted 'portrait' and not dissimilar from the sculptures now known or once believed to be Pindar. There is clearly a consistency in the type of bearded older man, surely the type to which Bellori had referred in citing the resemblance of Raphael's aged poet to a sculpture of Pindar that was well known in his day³⁵.



FIG. 6. — Pindar, frontispiece of *Omnia Pindari quae extant*, edited in Glasgow, 1744. Photo Library of Congress, Washington.

More significantly, perhaps, Raphael appears to have lavished a particular attention to the position and gesture of the elderly poet that suggests he would have been instantly recognizable to a connoisseur through the fact that he acts out his poetic personality in much the same way that Sappho was endowed by her creator with a visible 'soul'. The active turbulence of the monumental male form that balances the mellifluous harmony of the movement of his compositional counterpart, Sappho, to the left suggests the transcription of a literary, poetic, idiom into tangible visible form. Indeed, the powerful splendor and majestic radiance of this figure bring to mind the exuberant and turbulent poetic personality of this ancient lyric poet known throughout antiquity for his brilliant metaphor and the dazzling grandeur of his eloquence. The relaxed position of the aged poet's lower torso contrasts with the sudden activation of his upper body, suggesting the bold changes and sudden transitions that are characteristic of his poetic expression. So also the passionate torsion of his body suggests the fiery and swift forces that characterize his pungent aphorisms and the powerful spirituality of his phraseologies. It calls to mind the thunderous undulations of his language — fleet, passionate, and thrilling — that constitute the main features of the irregular temper of the poetic rhythms of which he was the inventor and unique master. The abrupt torsion, deep concentration, and strong solemnity of the movement and gesture of the aged poet in the painting suggest, in the same way that the musicality of the pose of Sappho characterizes the melodious contrapuntal energies of the flowing rhythmic sequences of her language, no poet other than Pindar.

Indeed, in the Renaissance Horace's adulation for Pindar's language, which he considered beyond the range of imitation, was well known: "*Like a river from the mountains rushing down, which the rains have swollen above its wonted banks, so does Pindar seethe and, brooking no restraint, rush on with deep-toned voice...*"³⁶. While Horace's image of Pindar as a tempestuous flood reflects Pindar's own descriptive metaphors

('rushing', 'boisterous', 'rugged', 'passionate', 'strong-spirited', 'streaming', 'burning'), it would also appear to mirror Pindar's own frequent use of water imagery – especially that of the 'overflowing' sea, 'raging' rains, showers, hail, storms, and thunder – an imagery that was well appreciated in antiquity³⁷. Horace's description of Pindar as the triumphant poet of Apollo, well known and frequently quoted in the early Cinquecento³⁸, paints a complex of characteristics of this exuberant personality suddenly aroused from his reclining position as a magnificent river god at the foot of the Castalian Spring.

Indeed the Castalian Spring of Mount Parnassus is frequently invoked by Pindar in order to suggest the soothing magic of the sublime world that is Parnassus; it may well be what Horace meant in praising the 'Pindaric spring'³⁹. Beside the water of Castalia, according to Pindar, is Apollo's home, and the stream is the fountain of his triumphs; through its flow the eternal and sublime value inspired by the passing occasion of an athletic triumph is exalted.

Though Pindar drew deeply on Homer and other more ancient writers for his materials, he is the master inventor of a rich new form of narrative poetry that reshaped ancient ideas through its thrilling and swift use of imagery. At the center of his most passionate homage is the god who loved Castalia and who from there made his music, a music that soothed the souls of the other gods and, in so doing, also the souls of men⁴⁰. Perhaps the greatest invention of Pindar, beyond the splendor of his language and imagery and the versatility of techniques for which he came to be so justly famous, is his idea of Apollo as the great unifier. Not only did the divine beauty of Apollo inspire the athlete with force and courage to achieve victory; but this victory becomes symbolic of the victory of mankind as a civilized being through the radiant gifts of Apollo. For Pindar, Apollo is the origin and symbol of all civilization. While in Homeric myths Apollo, who was merely one of many gods, was a terrifying divinity who through the violence of his arrows expressed his power and anger over men⁴¹, Hesiod

had first suggested that Apollo might play a less primitive role in serving as an inspiration to the youth of Greece⁴². The avenging nature of this god is further diminished in the *Homeric Hymns* to Apollo, which celebrate his human life and the origins of his religious cult⁴³. It was Pindar, however, who discovered the intelligence and grace of Apollo and endowed him with the exalted position of redeemer of mankind. Though Apollo did not replace his father, Zeus, in the divine hierarchy, he became the intercessor to Zeus for the human race. Through Apollo, in his 'reincarnation' as the Delphic ideal, the civilized arts were taught to man. Thus men learned to function according to moral law based on the advice of Apollo. Far from fearing the shooting arrows of an avenging angry god, mankind was now urged to seek counsel and moderation in life; indeed it is Apollo's music that gives rhythm and regularity to a law-abiding world, characteristics that would later be much appreciated by Plato who despite his professed suspicion of poets expressed his admiration for Pindar⁴⁴.

The new Apollo created by the lofty imagination of Pindar became an ideal god who combined spiritual beauty with physical beauty, worldly intelligence with idealistic purity, and sublime eloquence with human consideration. The primitive god had now evolved to become a resplendent and perfect divine being who bestowed endless gifts to his human protégés and gave man nobility. Among the many gifts with which he endowed mankind were not only sweetness, force, courage, and immortality, but also poetry and music. And it was through his guidance that a poet such as himself could be inspired to express the glory of the court and to counsel kings through divine inspiration. First proclaimed by Pindar himself in describing the inferiority of acquired skill to native genius⁴⁵, the importance of sacred revelation for authorizing and inspiring poetic activity was later to be taken up by Plato, Virgil, Dante, and others. It would eventually become the motto in the sign held aloft by the personification of Poetry in the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura, NUMINE AFFLATUR⁴⁶.

There can be no doubt that Apollo was the favorite god of Pindar. It was Pindar who made Apollo the founder and protector of the State, an interpretation often credited to Cicero⁴⁷. In his greater role as father of mankind, Apollo rules over the world from the sun which expresses his radiance in the rays of light it spreads over the world. The golden light in which the sun god appears is suggested in the poetic *afflatus* of Pindar's imagery; it is also suggested in praises of the 'golden light of the sun', and described as Apollo's glory shining down over the earth⁴⁸. Apollo expresses not his vengefulness, but rather his beneficial role in which he presides, like the sun that maintains order in the heavens, over the forces that regulate the universe⁴⁹. Accompanied by the Muses, he distributes peace and prosperity to mankind through music⁵⁰. Even the warlike thunderbolt, Zeus, is spellbound and tempered by Apollo's music⁵¹.

Apollo's role in the divine structure of the universe thereby becomes central and this in turn leads to his other role – as a unifier, a role implicit in the Pythagorean explanation of the etymology of his name, A-Pollo, or Alpha (denying) – Pollo (multiplicity). As Plato first explained in the *Cratylus* and Plutarch and the Pythagoreans later reaffirmed, the name Apollo refers to Oneness and Unity which, through the harmony of music, Apollo brought to the world⁵².

The homage of Pindar to the music of Apollo is paid in the special tribute he accords to the lyre. Not only is the lyre the instrument of Apollo and the Muses, but it was invented by Apollo, as Pindar well knew⁵³. Again and again, the spiritual power of its music is set forth by Pindar, who in the first *Pythian Ode*, perhaps his greatest Apollonian masterpiece, contrasts the peace, harmony, order, and regularity evoked by its phrases to the chaos, destruction, and horror of the eruption of Mount Etna which had occurred just prior to his own visit to Sicily and whose devastation he surely knew personally⁵⁴. The 'golden lyre' of Apollo had seven strings, as Cicero and especially Macrobius had discussed in works that were well known in late medieval and Renaissance times,

and Apollo played it with a plectrum as noted by Pindar, leading the chorus of Muses – as the revised painting by Raphael shows⁵⁵. Pindar, too, played Apollo's instrument, the seven 'toned' lyre, and sang to its music, as he himself frequently describes in his poetry and as ancient authors had noted in works that were well known in the Renaissance⁵⁶. Indeed, Pindar's great odes, designed to be sung to the accompaniment of the music of the lyre, made him the greatest lyric poet of Greece and were widely acknowledged in antiquity⁵⁷.

Because the seven strings of the lyre symbolized Platonic cosmology, as known through the *Timaeus* (the book held by Plato in the *School of Athens*, the fresco to the right of the *Parnassus*) and reflected in the speculations of Cicero and Macrobius, the symbolism of this number had come to be very important to Neopythagorean philosophers who derived from Plato and Aristotle (who were both considered to be Pythagoreans), and from Pythagoras himself, all of whom are main characters in the *School of Athens*⁵⁸. Through the music of the seven-stringed lyre the Pythagorean harmony of the universe, derived from the movement of the seven planets, was expressed⁵⁹. Thus the Greek literary tradition that Apollo, who was the god central to Pythagoreanism (Pythagoreans believed Pythagoras was named after Pythian Apollo), was born 'on the seventh day of the month' was of great importance. The principal feast days of Apollo fell on the seventh of any given month⁶⁰. Aeschylus referred to Apollo as the 'Commander of Sevens'⁶¹. Plutarch, in the *De E apud Delphos*, says that the number seven is consecrated to Apollo, while elsewhere he links Pindar with Pythagoras⁶². Long before, as noted above, Pindar had celebrated in song the golden lyre of Apollo with its seven strings. The greatest gift Apollo could bestow on those who expressed piety to him was, according to Pindar, to be allowed to die on the seventh day of the month⁶³; similarly Pindar refers to the seven 'maxims' attributed to the seven sages, derived from Apollo's teachings, the first two of which were engraved on his temple at Delphi⁶⁴. In this light, it might be well to reconsider Pope-

Hennessy's rather exotic hypothesis that the seven laurel trees in Raphael's *Parnassus* symbolize the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Quite clearly this is not the case. Rather it was most affectionately as well as archaeologically appropriate, as early Cinquecento *eruditi* well knew, to represent the number of laurels, the tree sacred to Apollo, as seven⁶⁵.

Pindar's special attachment to Apollo was reflected not only in the fact that Apollo serves as the fountain of inspiration for the celebratory ideas expressed in Pindar's odes; the sublime god of order and divine harmony was also extolled in at least one Hymn, several Paeans, and in his Processional Songs⁶⁶. Pindar's unique admiration for Apollo is also reflected in the historical character of this greatest ancient master of choral lyric, for he records with pride the fact that his own birth occurred at the time of the celebration of the Pythian festival at Delphi, a date now widely accepted as his actual birth date, in 518 B.C.⁶⁷. In numerous places, but especially in the sixth *Paeon*, Pindar describes Apollo's shrine at Delphi as his spiritual home; indeed the time he spent there is underlined by Pausanias, who described a famous relic he saw near the hearth of the temple – the very chair (mentioned above) in which Pindar sat while composing his songs to Apollo. Pausanias also describes offerings of fresh fruit that were shared between Pindar and Apollo by the Delphians, and he refers to a sculpture of the votive offerings of Pindar near a sculpture of Apollo in the Temple of Artemis at Thebes⁶⁸. Thus we may surmise that, perhaps because of the special circumstances of his birth, Pindar found himself uniquely attached to Apollo who through his music occupies a central place not only in Pindar's thought but also, as Pindar describes him ("O Phoebus...thou that lovest the Castalian fount of Parnassus mayest thou be willing to make...this land a land of noble men")⁶⁹, on Parnassus next to the Castalian spring where Pindar himself is placed in Raphael's painting.

The centrality and oneness of Apollo is expressed, in Raphael's composition, in the triangle that – in the composition as revised by Raphael –

dominates the design. This triangle is formed by the three protagonists, Pindar, Apollo, and Sappho. In order to assert his level as above that of mere mortals, Apollo was raised higher in the design where, in fact, he forms the apex of the triangle. Pythagoras was perhaps most famous for his supposed invention of a theorem based on this geometrical form, whereby the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the two sides. The Pythagorean triangle thus formed is not equilateral; its sides are balanced and balancing, with the apex occurring at the top, above the hypotenuse⁷⁰. The Pythagorean triangle was well known through the works of antique writers. Plutarch noted that its central point, or apex, was called 'Apollo'; and Plotinus noted the triangle as an example of multiplicity in one (the meaning, as described above, of A-pollo)⁷¹. Through his readings of Plutarch and Proclus, Marsilio Ficino had translated the triangle described by these writers as the "beautiful" triangle into the isosceles triangle which, for him, provided the key to the mathematics of Plato as representative of the Pythagorean tradition. For Ficino the unique role of the triangle in Pythagorean geometry and the Platonic viewpoint lay in its dominant unity as expressed in the One of its apex (which in turn reflected the greatest triangle of all, the Trinity)⁷².

This is precisely the relationship worked out in the revised design of the *Parnassus* by Raphael, which depends on the isosceles triangle. Apollo forms its center as well as its greatest height, and its sides form an esoteric balance in a unity which holds the physical and the conceptual together. Indeed, the isosceles triangle was endowed, according to Ficinian interpretations of the Pythagorean theorem, with geometrical power that related to the intellectual realm which, in turn, reflected harmonic proportions of Pythagorean music theory according to which the contemplation of *harmonia* begins with sensible objects and ascends to the contemplation of intelligible causes. Ficino's metaphoric use of the Pythagorean triangle demonstrates that it could be used to transfer meaning from one level to another; thus the cosmic corres-

pondence of poetry and music under the direction of Apollo in Raphael's painting suggests a veil through which connections and truths are revealed – an expressive form with, in 1510, an established esoteric meaning⁷³.

If this hypothesis is correct, one might well wonder if the role of Sappho in a design so strictly related to the role and position of Apollo is merely dependent on the fact that she played the lyre and was considered the inventor of lyric poetry. Indeed, there is significant additional reason to connect Sappho with Apollo as Neopythagoreans well knew. In several poems which are now, as they were in the Renaissance, known through fragments or through their quotation by subsequent antique authors, Sappho confesses that her joy in the beauty of the world was evoked by her love of the sun. As Pindar was later to do, she equated divinity with brightness and light⁷⁴. Since in the Renaissance view Pythagoreans were identified with a heliocentric cosmology⁷⁵, it is therefore not surprising that Pythagoreans saw a harmonious couple in Sappho and Pindar. Indeed, an antique tradition existed for the representation of the two in the same context⁷⁶.

Perhaps more significant was a fact well known in the Renaissance, especially since the publication in 1481 of a commentary on Sappho by Angelo Poliziano⁷⁷. This work, based on the account of Sappho's death provided by Ovid in the *Heroides*, describes, as Pausanias and Strabo had also described, and Menander before all of them, Sappho's leap – occasioned by her distress over the loss of Phaon – from the top of the famous Leucadian cliff. The top of this cliff was a sanctuary of Apollo and at the site of her leap stood a temple of Apollo. Praising the light of day, Sappho stood on the cliff as the dawning rays of the sun came over the land, contemplating her death and contemplating her eventual rescue (and therefore her immortality) by Apollo. As she prepared to leap, she consecrated herself to Apollo with a special verse citing the closeness of her bond with Apollo and her gift of her lyre to him⁷⁸.

The Pythagorean doctrine about the music of the spheres is thus consistent with the revision of Raphael's composition of the *Parnassus*. Interest in Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism was high in the Renaissance, especially in the late Quattrocento works of Ficino (who translated the works of Plotinus as well as those of Plato) and Pico della Mirandola (whose works constantly referred to his indebtedness to the 'Pythagoreans', whose *Hep-taplus* was divided into seven books each containing seven chapters, and whose library contained the works of numerous Pythagorean authors). Not only did the immortality that they affirmed have strong Platonic antecedents, its oldest literary expressions were also known⁷⁹.

As Jérôme Carcopino suggested in his study of Sappho's suicide in the context of Roman Pythagoreanism, Sappho was precocious in her hope that she would be saved by Apollo⁸⁰. For in her time Apollo, who was still a fearsome and avenging divinity, had not yet taken on the characteristics of universal savior of mankind as he would be invoked and described in the following century by Pindar. After Pindar's time, Apollo's gift of music to mankind would be considered to include the spirit of harmony on earth, peace and obedience to law, and the healing and saving arts⁸¹. Thus Sappho's action could well be considered, as also Pindar's exaltation of this divinity, to accord with the Pythagorean concentration on the various purifications and gifts attributed to the new Apollo. Like Sappho, Pindar believed in immortality as the gift of divinity, and in the rewards that awaited mankind after death⁸². The pleasures of Elysium, first described by Pindar, were reflected in Roman funeral traditions which were inspired by Roman poetic descriptions of life after death, a concept that Virgil had borrowed, as Franz Cumont has shown, from Pindar⁸³. The cult of the sun, and of Apollo – who as Cicero made quite clear was the sun for the Greeks – together with that of the Muses, would allow the soul of man, Pindar exulted, to reach the upper sunlight for all future time; thus the blessed would reach eternal happiness just as the passion of the palestrina would follow heroes to the true glory of their

future life⁸⁴. Thus Virgil, a poet recognized in antiquity as being reliant on the influence of Pindar, noted that it is the sun which warms the Elysian Fields, the blessed land of the dead, a concept which was, in turn, to influence future Roman poets⁸⁵. For many reasons, including this one, it is not surprising that Pindar was regarded as a poet of lofty genius by ancient Roman writers⁸⁶.

Interest in the work of Sappho had been quickened in early Renaissance times since the publication of Poliziano's commentary on Ovid's *epistola* in 1481⁸⁷. Pindar, however, was well known through late medieval manuscripts since the twelfth century, of which over 142 are extant. Interest in Pindar continued through the Quattrocento (when Aurispa and Francesco Filelfo brought manuscripts of Pindar to Italy from Constantinople). In the early decades of the fifteenth century Pindar was valued for his wealth of metaphor and epithet. Pindar was well known to Roman humanists, for two manuscripts of his works were in the Vatican library of Nicholas V while eight were in the library of Sixtus IV. In Parma a Latin edition of Pindar's *Odes* was printed in 1492. In 1506 Raffaello Maffei, a scholar of Greek who was in the Curia of Julius II, expressed great admiration for the work of Pindar. This occurred shortly before the planning of the Stanza della Segnatura was undertaken. It was immediately followed by a great acceleration of interest in Pindar in Cinquecento Rome, which saw over thirteen printings of Pindar's works as well as numerous imitations of his poetic style. The *editio princeps* of Pindar was printed in Venice in 1513, shortly after the execution of Raphael's *Parnassus*; it was to be immediately followed by the *editio secunda*, which was the first to include the *scholia* of Pindar, published in Rome only two years later. This work, dedicated to Leo X, has the distinct honor of being the first Greek book

printed in Rome⁸⁸. It was commissioned by none other than Agostino Chigi, well known to us through the writings of Vasari as a dear friend and major patron of Raphael⁸⁹.

Together known in Rome as players of Apollo's instrument, the lyre, Sappho and Pindar fit well into an interpretation that contrasts their poetic style – the one fluent and melodious, the other rugged and turbulent – and makes them true counterparts in a geometrical counterpoint far more esoteric than merely a grouping of famous poets. The deeply thoughtful planning of this work shows that Raphael took the care to have the protagonists act out their poetry. The lasting fame thus conferred on these two lofty lyric poets of the Archaic Age has thereby been ensured on the frescoed Parnassus.

It also demonstrates an appreciation for Greek poets as having been the first to praise as perfect the effulgence of the divine as they saw it reflected in the world⁹⁰. While central to Pythagoreanism as it was known in antiquity, this notion would assume even more significance in late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento Italy when the sun was accorded a special importance which resulted in astrological poetry (which spoke of the centrality of the sun) and scientific discovery (in which Copernicus expressed his debt to Pythagoras)⁹¹. Thus, Pindar fits perfectly into the Neopythagorean scheme of Raphael's *Parnassus*. The beauty and oneness of music and poetry is engaged and recognized under the authority of Apollo, the sun god and leader of harmony in the universe. In this sense, the *Parnassus* fresco may also be considered a Renaissance hymn to Apollo in the Golden Age of Julius II. As Virgil had foreseen in his vision of the new Golden Age, "tuus iam regnat Apollo"⁹².

C.J.-G.

NOTES

Grateful thanks are here expressed to R.R.R. Smith and Flemming Johansen for assistance with the archaeology of Pindaric statuary. Professor Smith kindly provided the photograph here published as Fig. 4. Appreciation is also extended to David Craven who kindly read this manuscript in preliminary draft.

1. PLOTINUS, *Third Ennead*, II, trans. Steven MACKENNA, in Plotinus, *The Enneads* (1917-30), London, 2nd rev. ed., 1991, 154. On the influence of the thought of Plotinus see A.H. ARMSTRONG, *Plotinus*, London, 1953, esp. 11-51. The importance of Plotinus in the Renaissance is discussed by Michael J.B. Allen in a recent work on Marsilio Ficino, who was profoundly indebted to Plotinus and whose *Enneads* he translated and analyzed in the *Plotini Enneades*, published in Florence in 1492. See ALLEN, *Nuptial Arithmetic: Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on the Fatal Number in Book VIII of Plato's Republic*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1994, esp. 40-43 and 116.
2. See, e.g., the most recent description of this fresco in James BECK, *Raphael*, New York, 1994, 88.
3. The probability that compositional drawings existed is underlined by a study for this scene (showing the figures as yet unclothed) now in Oxford, at the Ashmolean Museum. The drawing, believed to be a copy after Raphael, is reproduced in John POPE-HENNESSY, *Raphael: The Wrightsman Lectures*, New York, 1970, 96.
4. The instrument played by Apollo in this fresco has seven strings and not nine as Beck still holds (*loc. cit.*), following his 1973 text. Despite the muddled repainting of the strings, which might have given the impression that there were nine of them, that there were meant to be exactly seven is clear from the number of keys on the instrument (each key is attached to the string that it governs).
5. See Christiane L. JOOST-GAUGIER, "Sappho, Apollo, Neopythagorean Theory, and Numine Afflatur in Raphael's Fresco of the Parnassus", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, CXXI, Oct. 1993, 123-34.
6. Giorgio VASARI, *La terza et ultima parte delle vite degli architettori pittori et scultori*, Florence, 1550, 645; and *Id.*, *Le vite de più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1568), ed. Gaetano Milanesi, Florence, IV, 1879, 334-35. While some have suggested (e.g. John A. CROWE and G.B. CAVALCASELLE, in *Raphael*, I, London, 1882, 77) that Vasari was working from Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving and not from the original, this suggestion must be discounted. Clearly, Vasari was working from the original (final) painting, for Sappho is included in his description.
7. Giovanni Pietro BELLORI, *Descrizione delle immagini dipinte da Raffaello d'Urbino nel Palazzo Vaticano...* (1695), Rome, 1751, 55.
8. Gottfried HOOGEWERFF, "A Pie' del Parnaso", *Bollettino d'Arte*, Ser. II, 1926 (I), 4; and *Id.*, "La Stanza della Segnatura, osservazioni e commenti", *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, Ser. III, *Rendiconti*, XXIII, 1947-49, 326.
9. Luitpold DUSSLER, *Raffaello: kritisches Verzeichnis der Gemälde, Wandbilder und Bildteppiche*, Munich, 1966, 84.
10. Luisa BECHERUCCI, "Raffaello e la pittura", in *Raffaello*, ed. Mario Salmi, I, Novara, 1968, 112.
11. John POPE-HENNESSY, *op. cit.*, cf. 146 and 147.
12. Roger JONES and Nicholas PENNY, *Raphael*, New Haven and London, 1983, 72.
13. Paul WATSON, "To Paint Poetry: Raphael on Parnassus", *Renaissance Rereadings Intertext and Context*, ed. M.C. Horowitz, A.J. Cruz, and W.A. Furman, Urbana and Chicago, 1988, 119.
14. BECK, *loc. cit.* The text on this is the same as that of the earlier edition of the same work (New York, 1973).
15. ARISTOTLE, *Poetics*. See esp. Bk. VI.
16. The literature on this dramatist is vast. On his life and works see esp. Herbert W. SMYTH, "Introduction", in *Aeschylus*, I, London and New York, 1922, esp. xii-xxxiii; *Id.*, *Aeschylean Tragedy*, Berkeley, 1924; and Bruno SNELL, *Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama*, Leipzig, 1928.
17. In *The Seven Against Thebes* the action of the play revolves around a prophecy-warning of Apollo; but he does not appear in the play in which the characters, essentially, act out the circumstances that fulfill the warning. Only in the *Eumenides* is Apollo a major character, though he appears as a representative of Zeus; yet in this play his role is less important than that of Pallas (Athena).
18. On this see Gisela M.A. RICHTER, *The Portraits of the Greeks*, I, London, 1965, 121; and SMYTH, *op. cit.* (1922), xxiii.
19. On the character and appearance of Aeschylus and recorded portraits of him see RICHTER, *op. cit.*, 121-22.
20. RICHTER, *op. cit.*, fig. 577-97.
21. The dates of Archilochus are unknown, though he is generally regarded as having been active in the mid 7th century B.C. The disputes of ancient authorities on his dates are discussed in F. JACOBY, "The Date of Archilochus", *Classical Quarterly*, XXXV, 1941, 97-109.
22. R.R. BOLGAR (*The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*, Cambridge, 1963, 75) notes him as one of the classical authors whose work (fragments) was known in Byzantium. The circumstances of the life of Archilochus were largely legendary in Renaissance times as they remained until the discovery during the 1950s and 1960s of a series of inscribed slabs which have somewhat increased our knowledge about this poet who, it now appears, most probably did not invent iambic poetry after all. On this see the best biography of this poet, that of Anne P. BURNETT, in *Three Archaic Poets*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1983, esp. 15-54. The classic editions of the fragments are those of Amédée HAUVETTE-BESNAULT, *Archiloque, sa vie et ses poésies*, Paris, 1905; and François LASSERRE, *Les épopées d'Archiloque*, Paris, 1950. A more recent edition with commentary is that of Francesco BOSSI, *Studi su Archiloco*, Bari, 1990. The possibility that Archilochus played the flute is suggested by the comments of C. Maurice BOWRA in *Greek Lyric Poetry*, 2nd rev. ed., Oxford, 1961, 14 and *Id.*, "Archilochus", in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1970, 98.
23. Horace died in 8 B.C., in his 57th year. In two letters Horace described himself as short and fat: "cum ridere voles, Epicuri de grege porcum" (*Epistle* I.IV.16), and "maiores pinas nido extendisse loqueris... corporis exigui..." (*Epistle* I.XX.21 and 24), quoted from *Horace Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, ed. H.R. FAIRCLOUGH, London and Cambridge

(Mass.), 1939. This physical self-description is clearly corroborated by Suetonius in a surviving *vita* of Horace from the *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus*, a work well known in the 15th century through numerous manuscripts and now believed to have formed part of a larger work entitled *De Viris Illustribus*. Suetonius described Horace as short and fat: "Habitū corporis fuit brevis atque obesus..." and as having a big belly ("ut circuitus voluminis tui sit... sicut est ventriculi tui" – supposedly quoted from a letter by Augustus). See *Vita Horati*, in SUETONIUS, II, ed. J.C. ROLFE, London and New York, 1930, 488. On Horace see esp. Eduard FRAENKEL, *Horace* (1957), Oxford, 1980.

24. See the medal, now in Rome, reproduced in A. SENA CHIESA, "Orazio", in *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica classica e orientale*, V, Rome, 1963, 708; another medal is reproduced in Johann Jacob BERNOULLI, *Römische Ikonographie*, I, Hildesheim, 1969, Plate Münztaf. V, fig. 116. Bernoulli discusses Horace's small stature and dark hair (*ibid.*, 250-52). The small stature agrees with Suetonius (who does not mention dark hair). Cf. n. 23 *supra*.

25. VASARI, *op. cit.* (1568), IV, 339, 361 and 384.

26. In describing the tomb of Pindar, PAUSANIAS cites the old age of Pindar in *Description of Greece* IX.23.3. On this tradition see John SANDYS, *The Odes of Pindar Including the Principal Fragments*, ed. John Sandys, London and New York, 1919, "Introduction", esp. xiv-xvi. Lewis R. FARNELL, *The Works of Pindar Translated with Literary and Critical Comments*, London, 1930, 368; and C. Maurice BOWRA, *The Odes of Pindar*, Baltimore, 1969, ix and xi. See also the interpretation of Pindar's *Nem.* 11 by John Finley, who sees it as evidence of Pindar's extreme age (John FINLEY, Jr., *Pindar and Aeschylus*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1955, 76). For a description of the bees covering Pindar's lips with honey or wax see PAUSANIAS, *op. cit.*, IX.23.2-3.

27. On this portrait see esp. R.R.R. SMITH, "Late Roman Philosopher Portraits from Aphrodisias", in *The Journal of Roman Studies*, LXXX, 1990, 127-55, esp. 132-35 and pls. VI and VII. My appreciation is here expressed to R.R.R. Smith for being so kind as to share one of his photographs, which is here reproduced. On this portrait see also RICHTER, *op. cit.*, rev. ed. R.R.R. Smith, Ithaca, 1984, 178. The sculpture is from the late Roman period, dated by Smith as ca. early 5th century and it was found in recent excavations of a Neoplatonic academy in the Greek Aphrodisias, near Caria (Turkey). Smith regards this sculpture as a version of a well-known classical portrait type which can only now be correctly identified by this inscribed example. He points out the correct identification of this classical Pindar type is of major importance for the history of classical portraiture in classical as well as late antique times.

28. Perhaps the best of about five copies is the bust in the Capitoline Museum, Stanza dei Filosofi, no. 60 (on this see RICHTER-SMITH, *op. cit.* (1984), 177).

29. This sculpture, which is over life size was found in 1831 at Memphis (Egypt) along with portrait statues of other

poets and philosophers. On this see RICHTER, *op. cit.* (1965), 143 and fig. 783.

30. Karl SCHEFOLD, *Vergessenes Pompeji*, Munich, 1962, fig. 57.2. See also a similar example, also believed by Scheffold to represent Pindar, in *ibid.*, fig. 58.1.

31. This figure, now in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, was discovered in 1835 in the excavations of a Roman country villa at Monte Calvo in the Sabine Mountains and acquired in 1897 from the Villa Borghese in Rome. On this see Vagn POULSEN, *Les Portraits grecs (Publications de la Glyptothèque Ny Carlsberg, n. 5)*, Copenhagen, 1954, 77-79 and Pls. XXVI-XXIX (who considered it to possibly represent Archilochus); SCHEFOLD, *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter Redner und Denker*, Basel, 1943, 138-39 and nn. (as Pindar); RICHTER, *op. cit.* (1965), 144 and figs. 231-32 (as Pindar). Since the discovery of the inscribed bust of Pindar in the excavations at Aphrodisias (see n. 27 *supra*) this sculpture is no longer believed to represent Pindar. In a letter to the author, Flemming Johansen, The Director of the Copenhagen Glyptotek, suggests it might be Archilochus (letter to the author dated June 30, 1992). Because of the resemblance of this type of pose and that of Raphael's figure Archilochus was therefore considered in this author's deliberations.

32. PAUSANIAS, *op. cit.*, X.24.5.

33. Neither the *editio princeps*, printed in 1513, or the *editio secundo*, printed in 1515, contain a portrait of the author, though both editions contain engraved decorations. (On these see n. 88 *infra*). Both editions, however, quote Horace's praise of Pindar (HORACE, *Ode* IV.11) in lieu of a frontispiece.

34. This Greek edition of Pindar [*Omnia Pindari quae extant*] was printed in Glasgow by Robert Foulis. A copy of it is in the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C.

35. See n. 7 *supra*.

36. HORACE, *Ode* IV.11.5-9.

37. See, e.g., a Greek epigram from a statue of Pindar that reads: "Cyrus set up Pindar beside the water, because singing to the lyre he said, 'Water is best'". (*Greek Anthology* IX.809) Trans. by W.R. PATON, *Greek Anthology*, III, London and New York, 1925, 437.

38. See n. 33 *supra*.

39. Pindar's reverence for the Castalian Spring is expressed in a number of his odes. See, e.g., *Pyth.* I.39 and V.31, *Nem.* VI.38 and XI.24, and *Paeon* VI.8. That the Castalia was commemorated in a fountain at Delphi is suggested in *Oly.* IV.17. The term 'Pindaric spring' ('Pindarici fontis') is used by HORACE in *Epistle* III.10.

40. See, e.g., PINDAR, *Pyth.* I. In this ode Pindar praises the power and beauty of the lyre and, through it, the god of the lyre, Apollo.

41. See, e.g., HOMER, *Iliad*, V.432-60. On the Homeric Apollo see Georges DUMÉZIL, *Apollon Sonore*, Paris, 1982, 74-79 and *passim*.

42. See, e.g., HESIOD, *Theogony* 94-98 and 347-48.

43. *Homeric Hymn* III (*To Delian Apollo*) describes the birth of Apollo (who is still the 'far shooter' before whom

even the gods tremble) and his delight in music. *Homeric Hymn III (To Pythian Apollo)* describes the invention of the lyre by Apollo who although still a mighty and fearsome god now begins to play his lyre stepping high and followed by the Muses. Here is recorded his founding of a temple site set in a woodland glen on Mount Parnassus – which becomes the place of his worship as Pythian Apollo.

44. Plato's exclusion of poets from the ideal city of his *Republic* (X, *passim*) is explained in the *Phaedrus* (244-65). Evidently, however, Plato had read Pindar closely (for he quotes him on several occasions) and admired him as a moral authority and for his views on life after death. (See, e.g. PLATO, *Republic* I.331A, II.365B, and III.408C; *Laws* III.690C, IV.714E-751A, and XI.932A – alluding to Pindar).

45. See esp. PINDAR, *Oly.* II.84-87 and IX.100-13, also *Paeon* IX.34. On Pindar's views of the inferiority of acquired technique to divine inspiration see C. MAURICE BOWRA, *Pindar*, Oxford, 1964, esp. 4-12, and D.W. LUCAS, *Aristotle Poetics*, Oxford, 1968, xvi.

46. The idea that a poet is divinely inspired is noted by antique authors subsequent to Pindar and is an idea inherited by the medieval tradition. For an interesting study of this theme see BOWRA, *Inspiration and Poetry* (1955), Freeport, 1970. See also the discussion of *numine afflatur* in JOOST-GAUGIER, *art. cit.*, esp. 131.

47. Cf. PINDAR, *Pyth.* V.60-61 and *Paeon* VI.90-91 with CICERO, *De Natura Deorum*, III.xxiii. In 1506 Raffaello MAFFEI cited Cicero as his source for describing Apollo as the first custodian of Athens (*Commentaria Urbana*, Rome, 1506, CCCCLXXXIIIv).

48. See PINDAR, *Nem.* VI for an example of the *afflatus* of his writing style and the development of his imagery. Examples of Apollo shining down over man are many; see, e.g., *Oly.* VII.55-78, *Pyth.* IV.55-56, and *Paeon* VI and IX.

49. See, e.g., PINDAR, *Isth.* II.17-18. Regarding Apollo as the god of the sun and of light and his direction of celestial phenomena, see the interesting discussion of STEFOS ANASTASE, *Apollon dans Pindare* (diss. Univ. of Paris 1973), Athens, 1975, esp. 258-59. On Apollo in Pindar's work see also BOWRA, *Pindar*, Oxford, 1964, *passim*. For an example of a 1496 woodcut showing Apollo reigning, with his Muses, over the musical universe see S.K. HENINGER, Jr., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*, San Marino (Calif.), 1974, 182.

50. See, e.g., PINDAR, *Paeon* VI.54-61 and *Nem.* VII.11-16.

51. And so the warlike eagle sleeps on the sceptre of Zeus (PINDAR, *Pyth.* I.8-13). Zeus, too, the great thunderbolt, begins to become drowsy (to the music of the golden lyre of Apollo) and eventually falls asleep. Thus is the stern god of war soothed by the grace of Apollo and the Muses.

52. PLATO, *Cratylus*, 404.E-406.C explains why the name is appropriate to the power of the god. Plutarch, who wrote a (fragmentary) *vita* of Pindar (regarding Plutarch's lost *vita* of Pindar see n. 57 *infra*), later explained that the name Apollo means 'denying the many', or unity. Thus, he argued, Apollo

and the sun are the same, an argument that would be taken up by Plotinus and other Pythagoreans. Cf. PLUTARCH, *De E apud Delphos*, 393C and 394A, where he defines the name as meaning the abjuration of multiplicity and symbolizing one and one alone or unity simple and pure, and also ID., *De Iside et Osiride*, 381F with PLOTINUS, *Fifth Ennead*, V, where Plotinus discusses the Pythagorean concept of Apollo meaning the negation of plurality or the repudiation of the multiple. True unity, therefore, Plotinus argues, has a divine nature and is not composed of accidents or multiplicities.

53. PINDAR, *Pyth.* V.65.

54. PINDAR, *Pyth.* I. The order evoked by the power of music is set forth in the opening phrases of this ode. The subsequent description of Mount Etna belching fountains of fire, rivers of lava, and torrents of smoke evokes the monster that music is capable of holding in bondage, for it is music that promotes the regulation of nature as well as the governance of law.

55. See n. 4 *supra*, regarding the number of strings in Apollo's lyre in Raphael's painting. This is the same number specified by Cicero and Macrobius in their respective discussions of the music of the spheres. Re: bibliography on this subject see JOOST-GAUGIER, *art. cit.* For Pindar's descriptions of Apollo's lyre see, e.g., *Pyth.* I.1-5, II.68-71, and *Nem.* V.21-25 (which describes Apollo's plectrum as a golden quill).

56. See, e.g., PINDAR, *Oly.* VII.13-14, *Pyth.* II.67-71, and *Fragments* 125-26 (*Eulogy to Hieron of Syracuse*).

57. The examples are many which show that Pindar was widely respected not only by the Greeks but also by the Romans. Numerous Greek epigrams testify to the high esteem of Greeks for their countryman. See, e.g. *Greek Anthology* VII, 34 and 35; IX, 184 ("Pindar, holy mouth of the Muses"), 571 and 809; and XVI, 305. With respect to Plato's admiration for Pindar see n. 44 *supra*. See also, e.g., STRABO, *Geography* (which contains multiple references to Pindar); DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, who regarded Pindar as an exemplary writer and used him as an example of poetic composition (*De Compositione Verborum*, XXII, a critical essay that was known in the 15th and 16th centuries); HORACE, who professed that Pindar was beyond imitation (see n. 36 *supra*); QUINTILIAN, who maintained that Pindar was by far the greatest of the lyric poets of Greece for his inspired magnificence, the beauty of his thought, the exuberance of his language, and the flood of his eloquence (*Institutio Oratoria* X.i.61); the so-called LONGINUS, who suggested Pindar as a poet beyond comparison (*On the Sublime*, XXXIII.5); and PLUTARCH, who has frequent praise for Pindar in the various books of the *Moralia*. See esp. *De Musica*, in which Pindar is a frequent example and *None posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 1102E, where Plutarch describes Pindar as having first proposed Apollo as a god gentle to mankind. Plutarch's frequent quotations from Pindar were, of course, a source of further knowledge about this poet for late medieval times and into the Renaissance. In addition, Plutarch authored a (now lost) *vita* of Pindar, of which only a fragment survives. For its text see Plutarch's

Moralia, XV, ed. F.H. Sandbach, Cambridge (Mass.) and London, 1969, 82-83.

58. Many ancient writers, especially the Pythagoreans (e.g., Porphyry and Iamblichus) regarded the *Timaeus* as a Pythagorean work. It was one of the few works of Plato known throughout the Middle Ages. Cicero has translated a part of it but, more importantly, it was widely known through a 5th century (A.D.) Greek version with extensive commentary by the Pythagorean philosopher PROCLUS (See *Commentarius in Platonis Timaeum*, E. Trewendt ed., Vratislaviae, 1847) and through a 4th century (A.D.) (partial) Latin translation with commentary by Chalcidius. Ficino's Latin translation of this work, printed in Florence in 1484, was very influential in re-establishing the importance of this work for the Renaissance. On the significance of this work for Pythagorean doctrine and its importance for the Renaissance see HENINGER, *op. cit.*, esp. 21-22 and 47-49. To this discussion it should also be added that Plato was believed to have been born on the 7th of November and to have died on the same date, as Plutarch well noted in connecting Plato's birth date with Pindar's and both of them with Apollo who, he says, was known as the 'Seventh-born'. (PLUTARCH, *Quaestionum convivalium libri iii*, 717B-E).

Aristotle was also considered to have been a Pythagorean, and among his lost works a treatise entitled *On the Pythagoreans* was known. This work, which maintained there is fire in the center of the universe, around which the earth moved, was mentioned by Diogenes LAERTIUS (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, V.25) and cited by early Pythagorean philosophers (on this see discussion of HENINGER, *op. cit.*, 127-28). A Neopythagorean work printed in Rome in 1516 (*Pythagore philosophi aurea verba*, ed. Jacob Pulchridrapensis de Burgo-francho, a copy of which is in the Folger Shakespeare Library) includes the text of ARISTOTLE's *Nichomachean Ethics*, a work widely considered to be Pythagorean by Pythagoreans.

With respect to Pythagoras himself, he is not known to have left any writings, though a whole literature of works, teachings, and sayings attributed to him – all understood as 'Pythagorean' – developed from late Hellenistic times especially through the works of Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and others. Central to Pythagorean doctrine, as it developed, was the idea of harmony – which could be perceived through numerical study and was reflected in music – which reflected the orderly pattern of the universe. On Pythagoreanism in general, and its importance for Renaissance thought, see esp. HENINGER, *op. cit.* See also the bibliography in JOOST-GAUGIER, *art. cit.*, n. 53. On Pythagorean number theory in the Renaissance see ALLEN, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

59. Pythagoras' 'theory' of music was explained by PLINY THE ELDER (*Naturalis Historia* II.xx) as based on seven tones that reflected the universal harmony. Only Pythagoras could hear this noise, we are told by his biographer PORPHYRY (*De vita Pythagorae*, XXX). On this sound, which Cicero considered beyond the reach of the human ear and which Macrobius explained was exemplified in the seven-stringed lyre of Apollo, see JOOST-GAUGIER, *art. cit.* For Ptolemy the lyre

was a constellation (*The Almagest* VII) as it was also for CICE-RO (*De Natura Deorum* II.xliv).

60. On the birth of Apollo see HESIOD, *Works and Days* 770-71. Regarding this tradition and the important role of the number 7 in the mythology of Apollo see ANASTASE, *op. cit.*, 21 and 256.

61. Respecting the descent of Pythagoras from Pythian Apollo see IAMBlichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, trans. and ed. Thomas Taylor, London, 1818, 4-9. Iamblichus explains that Pythagoras' earthly father (Mnesarchus) knew that his son was the son of a god and in gratitude for his birth built a temple to Apollo, for he did not doubt that the soul of Pythagoras was sent to mankind from Apollo himself. Regarding Apollo as Commander of Sevens see AESCHYLUS, *The Seven Against Thebes* 800-01.

62. PLUTARCH, *De E apud Delphos* 391 F. In discussing the concept of time, Plutarch shows that Pindar and Pythagoras had the same point of view (*Platonicae quaestiones* 1007 B).

63. See esp. PINDAR, *Pyth.* II.70-71 and *Nem.* V.23-25. On Apollo's gift to the dying see ANASTASE, *op. cit.*, 259.

64. See the interpretation and discussion of ANASTASE in *ibid.*, 269.

65. POPE-HENNESSY, *op. cit.*, 139. The laurel tree was widely known in antiquity as the tree sacred to Apollo. See, e.g., PLINY THE ELDER, *Naturalis Historia* XII.iii.

66. See, in addition to the *Odes*, among surviving fragments, Hymn no. 51; *Paeans* w. 5, 6 and 9; and *Processional Song* "On Delos".

67. See *Fragment 205* ("The Birth of Pindar"). On Pindar's record of his birth and the Pythian festival at Delphi, with which it coincided, see SANDYS, *op. cit.* (as cited in n. 26 *supra*), vii.

68. PAUSANIAS, *Description of Greece* IX.23.3 and IX.17.2 respectively. With respect to Sappho's piety in identifying the divine with the light of the sun and Pindar's praise of the divine as the radiant warmth of the sun, see Bruno SNELL, "Pindar's Hymn to Zeus", in *The Discovery of Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, trans. T.G. Rosenmeyer, New York, 1960, 86-89. On the Pythagorean significance of Sappho's vision of splendor through her love of the sun see Jérôme CARCOPINO, *De Pythagore and Apôtres: Etudes sur la conversion du Monde Romain*, Paris, 1956, 34-35. See also Bowra's discussion of Sappho's description of Apollo as having hair of gold and holding a lyre while riding in a chariot drawn by swans (BOWRA, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, *op. cit.*, 235).

69. Pindar, *Pyth.* I.39-41, trans. Sandys, *op. cit.*, 159.

70. Though Pythagoras is not known to have left any writings, the (later) Pythagoreans claimed many works were authored by him. The Pythagorean 'theorem' in fact is first known in the work of Euclid (*Elements* I.xlviii). Originally a geometric construction, the Pythagorean theorem is now known as an algebraic formulation. For the traditional statement of the theorem as a diagram see HENINGER, *op. cit.*, 106, 139, and n. 73.

71. See PLUTARCH, *De Iside et Osiride* 381 F and PLOTINUS, *Sixth Ennead*, V. See also text *supra*, esp. at n. 52.

72. For PLUTARCH's description of the right angled triangle see *De Iside et Osiride* 375 F, where he describes it as the "most beautiful of triangles". For PROCLUS' description of the "beautiful" triangle see PROCLUS: *A Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*, trans. Glenn R. Morrow, Princeton, 1970, 339-40. On Ficino's indebtedness to the Pythagorean triangle and his modifications of it, see ALLEN, *op. cit.*, 3, 36-40, and 97-100.

73. On the Pythagorean theorem as published in Renaissance texts see Heninger, *op. cit.*, 106-07, esp. fig. 14, and 139, n. 73. On the use of the Pythagorean theorem in computing Platonic mathematics see ALLEN, *op. cit.*, 98-100. Regarding Ficino's use of numbers and symbols as an expressive force represented through the language of poetry see Eugenio GARIN, *L'umanesimo italiano*, Bari, 1978, 110-11. Ficino's discussion of Pythagorean and Platonic music theory depended on the key to bridging the gap between sensible experience and true knowledge, which lies in number. For FICINO (in the *De Rationibus Musica* and the *De Divino Furore*) numerological values are essential to defining the essence of *harmonia* and, therefore, of God's creation. An illuminating discussion of this is contained in William R. BOWEN, "Ficino's Analysis of Musical Harmonia", in *Ficino and Renaissance Neo-platonism*, ed. K. Eisenbichler and O. Pugliese, Toronto, 1986, 17-27.

74. See, e.g., *Fragments* 19, 65, 118, 176, and 177 in *Lyra Greca* I. With respect to Sappho's piety in identifying the divine with the light of the sun and Pindar's praise of the divine as the radiant warmth of the sun, see Bruno SNELL, "Pindar's Hymn to Zeus", in *The Discovery of Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, trans. T.G. Rosenmeyer, New York, 1960, 86-89. On the Pythagorean significance of Sappho's vision of splendor through her love of the sun see Jérôme CARCOPINO, *De Pythagore aux Apôtres: Études sur la conversion du Monde Romain*, Paris, 1956, 34-35. See also Bowra's discussion of Sappho's description of Apollo as having hair of gold and holding a lyre while riding in a chariot drawn by swans (BOWRA, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, *op. cit.*, 235).

75. The Renaissance view of Pythagorean cosmology, according to which a spherical earth rotated on its own axis around a central sun is discussed in HENINGER, *op. cit.*, 128-29. The influence of the sun, which maintains order in the heavens, on poets is considered in *ibid.*, 345. On the influence of the Italian Pythagoreanism of Ficino, Pico, Filippo Beroaldo, and others on Copernicus, see Bronislaw BILINSKI, *Il pitagorismo di Niccolò Copernico*, Rome, Warsaw, Gdansk, 1977, 94-123. Pythagorean *symbola*, preserved in the works of such ancient writers as Plutarch, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Diogenes Laertius, and Athenaeus, show a special respect for the sun. Perhaps the best known in Renaissance times was IAMBlichus' *Protrepticae orationes ad philosophiam*, which included the following maxims: "Discourse not of Pythagorean things without light"; and "Urine not, being turned towards the Sun". On these and the popularity of Pythagorean *symbola* in the works of Ficino, Pico, and Beroaldo, see HENINGER, *op. cit.*, 272-75. On their use by the early Church Fathers see *ibid.*,

57-58. This cosmology is reflected in the significance of the lyre which was believed to elevate the soul as compared to the flute (or pipes) which was believed to excite earthly insolence. Pythagoreans were of the opinion that the person who played the lyre was to be seated in the center of a circle. Those who surrounded him (in the form of a circle) sung. Thus was music employed to assuage the soul against aberrations such as rage and anger, and the harmonic ratio of the universe echoed in the chords of the lyre and the arrangement of the audience (IAMBlichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, *op. cit.*, 80-88). For an example of the great popularity of Pythagoras in early Cinquecento times the reader is referred to the publication of numerous (spurious) works of PYTHAGORAS during this time, e.g. *Pythagore philosophi aurea verba*, cited in n. 58 *supra*.

76. An anonymous *Epigram* in the *Greek Anthology* (II, no. 571) connects Pindar and Sappho, for as Pindar 'screamed' from Thebes, Sappho was among the Muses who heard his voice. Both Sappho and Pindar were lyric poets, both lived in Archaic (pre-classical) times, and both invented poetic languages that transformed the heroic epic into 'scenic' poetry. Above all, both believed in immortality and both had a special attachment to Apollo who was the central divinity for Pythagoreans and the god (from the antique pantheon) most favorable to humankind. On Sappho's devotion to Apollo and its Pythagoreanism, see CARCOPINO, *op. cit.*, esp. 9-81; on Pindar's devotion to Apollo and its Pythagoreanism, see ANASTASE, *op. cit.*, *passim*. In Pompeii a fresco survives where Sappho and Pindar are represented in attached scenes (see SCHEFOLD, *op. cit.*, 95-96 and pls. 57.2-58.4). Christodorus of Thebes is Egypt's Hellenistic description of the bronze statues in the celebrated gymnasium of Zeuxippos built by Septimius Severus in ancient Byzantium cites, among the sculptures in the series which included representations of Apollo and Pythagoras, both Sappho and Pindar. (See *Greek Anthology* II, 69-71 and 382-87). On Sappho and Pindar see Gennaro PEROTTA, *Saffo e Pindaro*, Bari, 1935.

77. Angelo POLIZIANO, *Commento inedito all'epistola ovidiana di Saffo a Faone*, ed. E. Lazzeri, Florence, 1971.

78. MENANDER, probably referring to a tale already old in his time, describes the "lady of Leucas", in a play (*Fragment* 312), who he identifies as Sappho as leaping from the Leucadian Cliff, the precinct of Apollo. The *Heroides* of Ovid fill in the lacunae: Praising Phoebus (Apollo) in the light of dawn, Sappho dedicates her leap to Apollo with these words: "Sappho the Singer, O Phoebus, hath gratefully brought Thee a zither [lyre, cithara]/ Token well suited to me, token well suited to Thee". In her hopes that Apollo will save her, she wails: "[I]f I perish... how much better for my bosom to be pressed to yours than headlong to be hurled from the rocks!". In her lament, she expresses her belief that Apollo will allow her to return to life (OVID, *The Heroides* XV, trans. Grant SHOWERMAN, Cambridge [Mass.] and London, 1947, 181-95). The temple of Apollo Leucatas, from where Sappho flung herself over the cliff, is described by a contemporary of Ovid, Strabo.

Strabo explains that it was an old custom of the Leucadians, every year at the time of the sacrifice to Apollo, to throw somebody over the cliff while boats waited below to pick up the person and carry him [her] to safety, thereby suggesting their immortality (*Geography* X.2.8-9). Carcopino offers an interesting etymological insight to this event based on the description, by Pliny the Elder, of the plant *eryngion* (or *candidam*), known in Greek as *leucas* (*Naturalis Historia* XXII.8-9). In a complicated exposition, Carcopino argues that Pliny is applying a Pythagorean point of view to the properties of botanical species. Thus Pliny's claim that this plant cures snake bites and saves man from death represents a Pythagorean eschatology. Sappho's love for Phaon, who ate the root of this spiny plant, is thereby transformed into divine love as Phaon is transmuted hypostatically into Apollo (On this see Pierre BOYANCÉ, "Leucas", in *Revue Archéologique*, 1929, 211-19 and, esp., CARCOPINO, *op. cit.*, 14-23). On the Pythagorean implications of Sappho's hope in immortality see *ibid.*, 24-81 and, for a reproduction of a late Roman apsidal fresco commemorating this event, see *ibid.*, Pl. I.

79. The Pythagorean and Orphic mystics affirmed the idea of immortality before Plato expressed his belief in the immortality of the soul in the *Republic* (see e.g., 330 D-E) and the *Phaedo* (see e.g., 85 C and 114 D). However before all of them this idea was expressed by PINDAR in many of his odes. See esp. *Oly.* II, where Pindar exults to the winner of a chariot race in 476 B.C. that soothed by songs (of the lyre) the gods will preserve the ancestral soil for their future race. The victorious athlete is also advised that after death all will be judged, with the lawless punished and the good rewarded in the light of the shining sun (heaven?) forevermore. There they will share a life with the gods and know an eternity with no tears, participating evermore in the joys of God (*Oly.* II.13-15 and 34-80). On the idea of immortality as expressed by Plato, which was well known to Renaissance scholars, see Paul SHOREY, "Second Introduction to Plato's *Republic*", in *Plato, Republic*, ed. Paul Shorey, II, Cambridge (Mass.) and London, 1942, lxiv-lxvi.

80. CARCOPINO, *op. cit.*, 46-47.

81. This is illustrated in *Pyth.* V, which was written to celebrate a chariot race of 462. Here Pindar summarizes the gifts of (his) Apollo: he calms wild beasts, his oracles are the friends of good rulers, he remedies and cures disease, he gave mankind the lyre which helps to bring into the heart law that is the enemy of strife (*Pyth.* V.60-70).

82. For an example of Pindar's elated and triumphant attitude towards the immortality of man see n. 79 *supra*. See also n. 84 *infra*. On the Pythagoreanism of Pindar's belief in immortality see Franz CUMONT, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains*, Paris, 1942, 52, 259, 295, 364, and 374.

83. See CUMONT, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, New Haven, 1922, 72-73.

84. On Apollo as the sun in Greek religion see CICERO, *De Natura Deorum*, II.xxvii and III.xx. Pindar's exultation is

recorded in the *Dirges*, where he speaks about the soul relieved of toil after the death of the body, its glistening in the 'upper sunlight' for all time, and the beginning of a new life in God (*Dirges, Fragments* 131-37); see also *Nem.* 1.70, which insists that the heroic life will be rewarded with eternal tranquility.

85. See, e.g., VIRGIL's description of Elysium as the land of happiness where the souls of the blessed find themselves in sweet green woods bathed in the light of bright spirits shining down on them from the sun and stars in *Aeneid* VI.641-45. Among the Roman authors who considered that Virgil imitated Pindar is Aulio Gellius who finds Virgil 'laboring' to find words such as vividly flowed from the pen of PINDAR (*Attic Nights* XVII.x.1-20). MACROBIUS also well noted the influence of Pindar on Virgil in the *Saturnalia*, a work that was known through the Middle Ages. A section of this work was, in essence, a kindly exposition of Virgil's attempts to rival Pindar – in which he [Macrobius] found Virgil ("whose wine did not come from the grapes of a single vine") wanting. See *Saturnalia* V.17.4-16. On this influence which flowed to other Greek and Roman poets, see CUMONT, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, *op. cit.*, 72-73 and 212-13. In the second passage, Cumont describes the decline of paganism as characterized by a belief in a hierarchy of souls whose ascendance to the beatific vision occurs on a scale of merit that corresponds to the various degrees of their rewards for a meritorious life. From the company of the splendor of God they help to govern the earth and are guaranteed eternal happiness.

86. Pindar, who had been highly regarded by Plato (being the only poet quoted in the *Republic* as well as in the *Laws* as cited in n. 44 *supra*) and by Plutarch, among numerous other Greek writers, was well known to Roman writers who esteemed him highly. On this see n. 85 *supra*. See also CICERO, who in the *De Finibus* has high praise for Pindar (II.115.34) and suggests Pindar had high aspirations and aims. In *The Orator* (2), Cicero ranks Pindar with Homer. HORACE held that no poet could dare to imitate Pindar, who was beyond imitation and, he suggested, perfect: "Whoever strives... to rival Pindar... is doomed to give his name to some crystal sea" (*Odes* IV.II., trans. C.E. BENNETT, in *Horace the Odes and Epodes*, Cambridge [Mass.] and London, 1939, 287). In QUINTILLIAN's view, Pindar was the peerless master of lyric poetry, of grandeur, of maxims, of figures of speech, of inspired magnificence, and of rich exuberance and eloquence (see n. 57 *supra* and *Institutio Oratoria* X.1.61-62). DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS, who spent much of his life in Rome, cited Pindar as the outstanding master of lyric poetry. As an example of the best writers of poetry, he says "it will be sufficient to cite Pindar... let him begin" (see reference in n. 57 *supra*). On Pindar's influence on Latin literature in general see David ROBINSON, *Pindar, A Poet of Eternal Ideas*, Baltimore, 1936, 1-21 and also n. 81 *supra*.

87. See n. 77 *supra*.

88. The Venice edition, entitled *Pindari Olympica Pythia Nemea Isthmia*, was published (in Greek) by Aldus Manutius and edited Andrea Navagero. The Roman edition was pub-

lished by Zachariam Calendi Cretensem and commissioned by Agostino Chigi. Both volumes may be found in the Library of Congress. The Venetian edition included a letter of introduction by Aldus Manutius himself in which he expresses thanks to Navagero for his brilliance in having recommended its publication. Manutius refers to the many (manuscript) copies of Pindar's works collected by Navagero, for whom Pindar was his favorite poet. The Roman edition included an epilogue in Greek which explains that heaven made this publication possible, in Rome the queen of cities, through the magnanimity of Agostino Chigi who gave his personal funds so that the renowned Calliergi might be brought to Rome in order to direct the founding of the first Greek press in that city, on the occasion of the printing of this work. On both these editions, and for the full texts discussed here (in French translation) see Ambroise FIRMIN-DIDOT, *Alde Manuce et l'Hellénisme à Venise*, Paris, 1875, 363-67 and 563-64. Regarding the early knowledge of Pindar in Italy through manuscripts and early printed editions of his odes see: SANDYS, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, Cambridge, 1903-08, esp. 104; Remigio SABBADINI, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV*, I, Florence (1905), 2nd ed., ed. E. Garin, 1967, 47, 57, 63, and 64; Robert SHAFER, *The English Ode to 1660. An Essay in Literary History*, Princeton, 1918, esp. 56-

58; FARNELL, *op. cit.*, 357-83; ROBINSON, *op. cit.*, esp. 22-23; BOLGAR, *op. cit.*, 75, 443, and esp. 503; William HARRISON WOODWARD, *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators*, Cambridge, 1963, 50; BOWRA, *Pindar, op. cit.*; Roberto WEISS, *Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford, 1967, 111; and Egmont LEE, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters*, Rome, 1978, 54. A copy of the 1492 Parma edition of Pindar's *Odes* is in the University Library at Cambridge (see J.C.T. OATES, *A Catalogue of the Fifteenth-Century Printed Books in the University Library*, Cambridge, Cambridge, 1954, no. 2581).

89. On the relation between Agostino Chigi and Raphael, see VASARI, *op. cit.* (1568), IV, 340, 366, and 377.

90. SNELL, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

91. On astrological poetry describing the sun, see Benedetto SOLDATI, *La poesia astrologica del Quattrocento*, Florence, 1906, and BILINSKI, *op. cit.*, 103-106. Copernicus himself expressed his debt to the Pythagoreans in Nicolaus COPERNICUS, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium libri VI* (see, e.g., his *Preface and Dedication to Pope Paul III*, in which he praises their example, and I.5, where he acknowledges one of several debts to Pythagorean mathematics).

92. VIRGIL, *Eclogue IV*.

RÉSUMÉ. — Pindare sur le Parnasse : un élan néopythagoricien à la Chambre de la Signature de Raphaël.

En accord avec l'inspiration néopythagoricienne qui semble avoir animé Raphaël dans ses retouches à la fresque du Parnasse, on découvre que le noble vieillard aux cheveux blancs assis au premier plan à droite n'est pas Horace, comme l'ont supposé nombre d'auteurs modernes, mais plutôt Pindare comme le suggérait Bellori en 1695. Il est proche des images traditionnelles du poète grec archaïque comme des sculptures antiques qui, on le sait aujourd'hui, le représentent aussi. Raphaël a peint le grand poète selon la tradition, dans un âge avancé, mais il a su traduire aussi sa personnalité exubérante et turbulente. Le triangle isocèle de Pythagore formé par Pindare, Sappho et Apollon se conforme aux recommandations de Marsile Ficini. Les trois figures expriment ainsi l'association indifférenciée de la poésie et de la musique et, par là, le caractère cosmologique d'Apollon qui les synthétise. Sappho et Pindare, qui jouaient tous deux de la lyre, formaient un couple pythagoricien, avec une dévotion particulière pour Apollon, et ils avaient reçu, conformément à la pensée pythagoricienne, le bénéfice de l'immortalité réservée aux fervents adorateurs du dieu. A l'époque où Raphaël peignait sa fresque, les humanistes s'intéressaient particulièrement à Pindare, dont les œuvres complètes furent publiées peu après ; ce fut même le premier ouvrage grec imprimé à Rome, commandé par Agostino Chigi, ami et mécène de Raphaël.